(b) if so, the details thereof, and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The regiments raised on the basis of caste/class during the pre-independence period are continuing for historical, traditional and motivational reasons.

Purchase of 636 diesel submarines from Russia

1577. SHRI JAYANT KUMAR MALHOUTRA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to make an off-the-shelf purchase of two type 636 diesel-electric 'Kilo' class submarines from Russia;

(b) if so, the payment modalities worked out by Government, and

(c) the extent to which the procurement of the submarines would enhance the combat capability of the Indian Navy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However there is a proposal for purchase of two 877 EKM Submarines from Russia. The expected modality of payment is based on stage payments.

(c) These submarines are intended to replace Foxtrot class of submarines due for decommissioning, and would serve the purpose of maintainance of force levels.

Decommissioning of INS Vikrant

1578. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) to what use the earstwhile aircraft carrier of the Indian Navy, INS Vikrant, is being put after being decommissioned; and

(b) the steps taken to induct another aircraft carrier in the Navy after decommissioning of Vikrant?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU): (a) Suggestions have been received for conversion of 'INS Vikrant' into a museum. Such a conversion is dependent on the feasibility or otherwise of doing so.

(b) Feasibility of outright purchase of an aircraft carrier as a replacement for INS Vikrant is under examination.

Airborne warning and Control System for IAF

1579. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Air Force has proposed requirement of Rs.3000 crore for Airborne warning and Control System;

(b) whether Government have given approval to the request; and

(c) if not, the steps proposed to ensure optimum utilisation of Air Defence Aircrafts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU): (a) to (c) A proposal has recently come from the IAF for acquisition/development of Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS), which is under examination.

Unsatisfactory progress of the LCA project

1580. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that inspite of the periodical assurance being given on the satisfactory progress of the LCA, the project continues to slip; and

(b) if so, what is the actual situation and PDC?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU): (a) and (b) The LCA project was sanctioned in 1983 with a tentative time frame of 1993, which was to be refined later after carrying out detailed Project Definition. The Project Difinition outlined the need for phased approach for development and incorporation of state-of-the-art technologies to ensure that the LCA would be a world class and contemporary aircraft at the time of its induction. Based on this, the Government accorded sanction in April 1993 for phase-I of full scale engineering development envisaging induction LCA into Air Force by 2005. The first indigenous LCA has already been rolled out and is undergoing detailed ground qualification testing to ensure safe flight. All efforts are on for preparing the aircraft for the first flight by the end of the year. The project activities are being closely monitored at a very high level and the LCA is expected to be inducted in the Air Force by the year 2003 i.e. two years ahead of schedule.

Type-B Radars from HAL for IAF

1581. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact tht IAF ordered 4 Type-B Radars from HAL without proper evaluation, at a cost of Rs. 12.97 crores which did not prove reliable and had to be discarded; and

(b) if so, who has been held responsible for this?

THE MINISTER OF IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU): (a) and (b) IAF had placed orders for 8 PAR-1M radars on the HAL. HAL supplied 7 nos. of Radars to the IAF against this order. The Radars were evaluated by an inter-departmental Steering Committee. Initially these radars had some design defects. Such drawbacks are inherent in any system being developed indigenously. Now these radars are in operational use with IAF and have not been discarded.

Manufacture of Air Defence Ship indigenously

1582. SHRI YERRA NARAYANA-SWAMY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to manufacture Air Defence Ship indigenously;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken to remove the shortfall in the destroyer frigate category in the Indian Navy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU): (a) and (b) There is a proposal for indigenous construction of an Air Defence Ship (ADS). The details are being worked out.

(c) In an effort to maintain the force levels, a two pronged approach has been adopted i.e. import of Frigates in the immediate future and indigenous construction to meet the long term requirement.

हेलीकाप्टरों का मार गिराया जाना/दुर्घटनाग्रस्त होना

1583. **श्री राघवजी:** क्या रक्षा मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) सुरक्षा बलों के कितने हेलीकाप्टर दुर्घटनाग्रस्त हो गए अथवा मार गिराए गए;

(ख) दुर्घटनाग्रस्त हेलीकाप्टरों का ब्यौरा क्या है; और

(ग) मार गिराए गए हेलीकाप्टरों का ब्यौरा क्या है और ये किनके द्वारा मार गिराए गए तथा उनके विरुद्ध की गई कार्यवाही का ब्यौरा क्या है?

रक्षा मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री एन०वी०एन० सोमू): (क) से (ग) अप्रैल, 1993 से आज की तारीख तक 21 हेलिकॉप्टर दुर्घटनाग्रस्त हुए जिनमें मुख्यतः चीता, चेतक और एम आई हेलिकॉप्टर शामिल हैं। तथापि, किसी भी हेलिकॉप्टर को मार गिराए जाने की कोई रिपोर्ट नहीं है।